

18th Transportation Company (Medium Boat)

On 6 November 1944, near the end of World War II, the Army constituted the 850th Transportation Corps Service Company (Harbor Craft) and it was activated in New Caledonia on 25 November 1944. The next year on 29 April 1945, it was redesignated as the 850th Transportation Corps Harbor Craft Company then inactivated at New Caledonia on 17 June 1946. While inactive it was redesignated as the 18th Transportation Harbor Craft Company on 15 April 1947, and then activated in the Philippines on 1 May 1947 only to be inactivated the next year on 20 December 1948. While on inactive status, it was redesignated as the 18th Transportation Company and allotted to the Regular Army.

On 25 June 1950, North Korean tanks rolled across the 38th Parallel and invaded the Republic of Korea. The 24th Infantry Division led the first units of the US Eighth Army into Korea on 30 June. After a series of setbacks, they bought time for the rest of Eighth Army to stabilize the Pusan Perimeter. On 15 September, X Corps landed at Inchon with the 1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions and the North Korean Army began to withdraw. Because of his success with the landing at Inchon, General Douglas MacArthur decided to pull the X Corps out and conduct landing on the other side of the Korean peninsula. On 29 October, X Corps landed at Iwon then opened up Hamhung as the main port of operations. They advanced to the Chinese border and on 29 November, the Chinese Communist Army attacked across the border. The Chinese infiltrated past US forces forcing them to fall back to the 38th Parallel. There the war became a stalemate reminiscent of the trench warfare of World War I. The Chinese and Americans finally signed an armistice on 27 July 1953.

While peace negotiations were near fruition, the US Army activated the 18th Transportation Company (Heavy Boat) on 15 June 1953. Gerry Damico enlisted in 1953 and went to basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey and then attended MOS 562.20 (harbor craft crewman) training at Fort Eustis, Virginia, where he was trained on USAF crash boats, J-boats and LCMs. Upon graduation, he received orders for Sasabo, Japan, and arrived on a troop ship with troops who had orders for different units. He stepped off and was issued olive drab winter uniforms and then sent to Inchon, Korea. Sasabo may have just been a stop over point because he boarded the same ship to sail to Inchon. Upon arrival in Korea, he reported to the Repo Depot in Seoul and then returned to Inchon.

In March 1954, he joined the newly activated 18th Heavy Boat Company at Inchon. At the time of his arrival the company only had a couple WWII Navy Landing Craft Utilities (LCU). Gerry arrived as a replacement and was assigned to LCU1255, which was an armored LCU. LCUs were being refitted in Japan and brought over by sea-going large tugs. The LCUs arrived in increments during April and May and the company ended up with nine LCUs. The replacement LCUs had windows completely around the wheel house. LCU1255 was replaced by LCU789, and Garry was later assigned to LCU675. Another boat in the company was LCU1080.

LCUs delivered supplies from Inchon to the outer islands. They would come in and drop ramp on the beach then would pull off the mud flat with their stern anchor before the tide

went completely out. There were no LCMs operating the port, only tugs and LCUs. The small tugs operated in the tidal basin and operated through the locks. The tugs docked the deep draft ships. Normally port command told the LCUs to stay in the harbor since they were the only boats that could operate when the tide went out. The tidal variation in Inchon was as much as 40 feet in some places. There was only a shallow channel six feet deep and 40 feet wide and the LCU had a 4-foot draft and was the only vessel that could work that channel. If the LCU had no missions when the tide went out, they would sit on the mud flat in the small part of the harbor, so as not to block the channel. If the boat needed maintenance, they would go in and let the tide go out then get beached high and dry so the maintenance crew could work on the vessel.

The 18th Transportation Company was inactivated on 25 June 1955 having earned one campaign streamer for service in Korea, summer-fall 1953, and the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation. Gerry served in the 18th Heavy Boat Company for 18 months and left in September 1955.

On 18 May 1956 while on inactive status, the 18th Transportation Company was consolidated with the 587th Transportation Company (Light Helicopter). On 7 August 1940, the US Army constituted Company G, 31st Quartermaster Regiment and activated the Regiment at MacDill Field, Florida, on 16 August. The Army reorganized the Quartermaster Regiments so that the companies, battalions and regiments could be attached and detached according to needs, thus creating different lineages. On 10 January 1942, Company G was redesignated as the 748th Quartermaster Company (Truck). On 17 January 1943, the company was again redesignated as the 1936th Quartermaster Company, Truck (Aviation) then inactivated as the 1936th Quartermaster Company, Aviation at Kelly Field, Texas on 13 October 1945. It had earned campaign credits for Algeria-French Morocco, Tunisia, Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, and Rhineland.

While in active, the company was transferred to the Transportation Corps with other Quartermaster units and redesignated as the 1936th Transportation Corps Truck Company on 13 October 1946. It was again redesignated as the 587th Transportation Company (Light Helicopter) on 21 December 1954. On 5 January 1956, it was activated at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. To combine the battle honors of the two decorated units, the 587th was consolidated into the 18th Transportation Company on 18 May 1956.